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SUBS [Roman Zadunayskiy report: "Market Dictates Tough Conditions for Military Press. Expert Commission Has Formulated Proposals To Improve Mass Media System in the Armed Forces"]

SUBJ Military Papers' Circulation Declines

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2 [Text] The optimization of the military mass media system -- this was how Lieutenant General Konstantin Bogdanov, expert commission chairman and chief of the Russian Federation Ministry of Defense Main Directorate for Work With Personnel, defined the main task of the work of the expert commission on the military mass media system.

3 Despite the fact that the military press is subsidized by the Russian Ministry of Defense, he said in an interview with an ITAR-TASS correspondent, the print runs of military newspapers and magazines, like those of most other publications, are decreasing. Thus the total print run per issue of all military magazines in the first half of 1993 will be 412,000 copies, and of all military newspapers 400,000. Compared with the first half of 1992, these indicators constitute 45 and 42 percent respectively of the former print runs of military mass media.

4 The former military mass media system collapsed with the formation of national armies, and a Russian Federation Ministry of Defense mass media system was rapidly formed, Gen. Bogdanov went on to say. Right now the following are published in the Russian Armed Forces: Two central newspapers KRASNAYA ZVEZDA and SYN OTECHESTVA, the central journal ARMIYA, 14 journals issued by the Russian Federation Armed Forces General Staff, the branches of the Armed Forces, and the main and central directorates, 17 newspapers issued by military districts and army and fleet groups, as well as approximately 100 army, flotilla, and regional newspapers, and the printed publications of large strategic formations, naval bases, ships, military training institutions, district construction directorates, and road construction brigades. The Russian Federation Ministry of Defense television and radio broadcasting studio "Slavyanka" and a number of regional military television and radio centers are also in operation.

5 According to Lt. Gen. Bogdanov, most district and grouping newspapers are switching to weekly publication, except for publications in regions where information is particularly necessary.

6 At the moment, unfortunately, we have no soldier's or sailor's journal, Konstantin Bogdanov went on. Therefore the expert commission has proposed to publish a journal entitled SOBESEDNIK VOINA [Serviceman's Interlocutor] based on the magazine AGITATOR ARMII I FLOTA [Army and Navy Agitation Worker]. This will be a soldier's and sailor's journal similar to an Army version of ARGUMENTY I FAKTY. It will be aimed at those wishing to serve on a contract basis. It is planned to publish a journal for military sociologists, psychologists, lawyers, and teachers.

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- 7 However, the market is dictating tough conditions to military journalists, just as it is to "civilian" journalists, for the survival of their publications. Therefore the editorial offices of military newspapers and magazines are looking for new topics and changing the way in which they present their material. It is true that some military publications, in trying to attract readers, are filling their pages with light fiction, detective stories, and yarns about UFO's. By doing this they are moving away from their principal tasks -- informing servicemen about the life of the Armed Forces, Gen. Bogdanov said in conclusion. (endall) 14 jan

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